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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0067
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RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU 0011
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 0019
RUESLE/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI CH 0004
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 0002
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 0038
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LILONGWE 000735

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/25/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [PBTS](#) [MI](#) [TZ](#) [MZ](#)
SUBJECT: MALAWI: MOZAMBIQUE BLOCKS PATROL BOATS DONATION
FROM TAIWAN

REF: A) DAR ES SALAAM 1215

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Classified By: Ambassador Alan Eastham for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: Malawi Defense Force Commander General Marko Chiziko told Ambassador that Government of Mozambique (GRM) was blocking the delivery of the Taiwan's donation of four patrol boats for use on Lake Malawi, probably at the urging of the Chinese Government. Chiziko claimed the government of Malawi (GOM) planned to use the boats primarily to stop the flow of illegal immigrants across the lake, but so far the GRM was refusing to honor a prior agreement to allow the boats to be transported from the port of Nacala overland into Malawi. End Summary.

China Blocking Taiwanese Military Aid?

12. (C) Four patrol boats donated to the Malawi Defense Force (MDF) by Taiwan for use on Lake Malawi were due to arrive in the Mozambique port of Nacala on September 7. According to MDF Commander, General Marko Chiziko, the boats have not arrived because of the refusal of the GRM to honor an agreement to allow the MDF to transport the boats through Mozambican territory. While the GRM told the GOM that the boats were too heavy and would damage Mozambican roads, Chiziko believes it is really pressure from the People's Republic of China (PRC) that is stopping the transport of the boats. Taiwan's military attache in Lilongwe told emboff separately that since Taiwan does not have relations with either GRM or the government of Tanzania (GOT), it is depending on the GOM to negotiate transportation of the patrol boats. The process has left the Taiwanese without a clear picture of the current situation, including whether infrastructure difficulties are the only/real obstacle. The Taiwanese DATT confirmed that the boats weigh 52 tons each and that transportation by road was likely the only option to get the boats into Malawi.

13. (C) Chiziko commented that the main purpose of the four

patrol boats would be to help stop the flow of illegal immigrants across Lake Malawi. Young males, primarily from the Horn of Africa, have been flowing into Malawi through both the land border with Tanzania and across the lake. Most of the men show up without travel documents, or with passports that have no stamps in them. Questioning by the GOM revealed that most are from Eritrea or Somalia and claim either to be deserters or to be fleeing threats of forced conscription. The MDF reports that as many as 100 individuals of this type have entered Malawi on a single day and are dispersing into villages in the northern part of the country.

Lake Boundary "Not in Dispute"

14. (C) Responding to an inquiry about alternative routes for the boats, Chiziko told the Ambassador Sept 24 that the GOM has had no discussions with GOT about the possibility of bringing the boats through Tanzania, but he noted that China has influence in Tanzania as well. As far as the water boundary, Chiziko explained that the current boundary between Malawi and Tanzania, which grants Malawi the lake up to the shoreline, was established by agreement between the British and Germans during the colonial period and has been upheld repeatedly since then under the OAU/African Union principle of maintenance of colonial-era boundaries. Chiziko said he knew of no active disputes concerning the boundary.

15. (C) Comment: The GOT has expressed concerns about Taiwanese military donations to Malawi starting an arms race on Lake Malawi (reftel). Although the Malawians universally believe the instigation of the transit holdup to be the PRC, we believe Tanzania is the more likely culprit, based on President Kikwete's statement to Ambassador Retzer reported in reftel. We are also sensing some disquiet among Malawians

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-- although not on the part of the President or his immediate circle -- about the cost/benefit calculation involved in holding onto the Taiwan relationship as Beijing increases the depth and dollar value of its relationships around the African continent. Malawi is one of Taiwan's five African diplomatic supporters and Taiwan has been generous in both military and non-military aid, including a USD 2.5 million donation for construction of a new Parliament building in Lilongwe. Taiwan also recently made USD 1.5 million cash donations to the MDF which were used to purchase armored personnel carriers that the MDF will use in its expected deployment to the UN peacekeeping mission in Darfur. The Taiwanese donation of four patrol boats also meets a current stated need of the MDF. Chiziko has complained several times recently about poor security along the Tanzanian border leaving Malawi vulnerable to illegal immigration and other threats, and has expressed the need to cooperate and discuss the issue with GOT. With respect to the recommendation in reftel concerning a potential arms race on Lake Malawi, we do not believe it would be advisable for the USG to question the GOM's acceptance of the Taiwanese patrol boat donation, since the acquisition would appear to serve a legitimate, peaceful purpose.

EASTHAM